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SOUTHEAST INFORMATION OFFICE: Atlanta, Ga.

Technical information: (404) 893-4222 BLSInfoAtlanta@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/southeast

Media contact: (404) 893-4220

County Employment and Wages in Alabama – Second Quarter 2016

Employment increased in five of Alabama's six largest counties from June 2015 to June 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2015 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that employment increases ranged from 2.7 percent in Madison County to 0.6 percent in Jefferson and Shelby Counties. Employment in Tuscaloosa County declined 0.2 percent over the year. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, employment advanced 1.5 percent from June 2015 to June 2016 as 291 of the 344 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Williamson, Tenn., recorded the largest percentage increase, up 6.7 percent over the year. Midland, Texas, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment among the largest counties in the U.S. with a loss of 8.3 percent.

Among the six largest counties in Alabama, employment was highest in Jefferson (341,200) in June 2016, while Shelby had the smallest employment (84,500). Together, Alabama's large counties accounted for 52.6 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 142.7 million in June 2016.

Five of Alabama's six large counties had over-the-year wage increases with Shelby County (2.8 percent) experiencing the largest increase. Madison County had the highest average weekly wage among the state's six largest counties at \$1,050. Nationally, the average weekly wage was \$989, a 2.2 percent increase from a year ago. (See [table 1.](#))

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 61 counties in Alabama with employment below 75,000. Average weekly wages in these counties ranged from \$1,117 to \$571. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages advanced in five of Alabama's largest counties from the second quarter of 2015 to the second quarter of 2016. Shelby's 2.8-percent wage increase ranked 107th among the nation's 344 largest counties and was the only large county in Alabama to rank in the top third of the national ranking. Average weekly wage growth in Alabama's four other large counties ranged from 2.3 to 0.1 percent. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, 304 of the 344 largest counties had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. McLean, Ill., had the largest wage increase among the largest U.S. counties (21.0 percent). Elkhart, Ind., was second with a wage increase of 8.5 percent, followed by the counties of King, Wash. (8.1 percent); Washington, Ore. (7.4 percent); and Albany, N.Y. (7.0 percent).

Of the 344 largest counties, 36 had over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Ventura, Calif., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages (-8.4 percent), followed by Forsyth, N.C. (-6.5 percent); Lafayette, La. (-6.2 percent); Gregg, Texas (-3.7 percent); and Midland, Texas (-3.2 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 3 of Alabama's 6 largest counties placed in the top half of the national ranking among the 344 largest counties in the second quarter of 2016. Madison County's average weekly wage of \$1,050 was above the U.S. average of \$989, and ranked 70th nationwide. Jefferson County (\$967) and Shelby County (\$922), ranked 122nd and 161st, respectively. Average weekly wages in the remaining three counties placed in the bottom half of the national ranking.

Nationwide, average weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average in 102 of the 344 largest counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,252. San Mateo, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,871, followed by New York, N.Y. (\$1,866).

Seventy percent of the largest U.S. counties (241) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the second quarter of 2016. Horry, S.C. (\$598) had the lowest weekly wage, followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$602) and Hidalgo (\$626).

Average weekly wages in Alabama's smaller counties

Among the 61 counties in Alabama with employment below 75,000, Washington (\$1,117) and Dale (\$1,010) were the only two counties that had a weekly wage above the national average of \$989. Perry County had the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$571 in the second quarter of 2016. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 67 counties in Alabama were considered, 23 reported average weekly wages under \$650, 24 had wages from \$650-\$749, 12 had wages from \$750-\$849, and 8 had wages above \$850. (See [chart 1](#).)

Additional statistics and other information

Quarterly data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the [Technical Note](#) or visit the QCEW Web site at <https://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2015 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2016 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2015* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn15.htm.

The County Employment and Wages release for third quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, March 7, 2017.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.7 million employer reports cover 142.7 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200, Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 6 largest counties in Alabama, second quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	June 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, second quarter 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	142,717.2	1.5	--	\$989	--	2.2	--
Alabama	1,923.5	1.2	--	835	37	2.0	29
Jefferson, Ala.	341.2	0.6	257	967	122	2.3	172
Madison, Ala.	191.7	2.7	76	1,050	70	-0.2	311
Mobile, Ala.	170.3	1.4	179	844	239	2.2	181
Montgomery, Ala.	132.0	1.7	148	834	250	1.5	241
Shelby, Ala.	84.5	0.6	257	922	161	2.8	107
Tuscaloosa, Ala.	91.2	-0.2	303	811	276	0.1	304

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Alabama, second quarter 2016

Area	Employment June 2016	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2)	142,717,157	\$989
Alabama	1,923,544	835
Autauga	10,755	681
Baldwin	73,741	637
Barbour	7,888	665
Bibb	4,198	754
Blount	8,196	632
Bullock	2,999	623
Butler	6,853	631
Calhoun	43,831	714
Chambers	7,919	671
Cherokee	5,119	620
Chilton	9,434	646
Choctaw	3,326	901
Clarke	8,255	709
Clay	3,869	619
Cleburne	2,211	813
Coffee	15,245	621
Colbert	24,009	795
Conecuh	3,483	650
Coosa	1,363	638
Covington	12,227	650
Crenshaw	3,826	691
Cullman	28,958	693
Dale	16,855	1,010
Dallas	12,603	676
DeKalb	21,023	647
Elmore	19,824	642
Escambia	12,969	699
Etowah	36,569	672
Fayette	4,084	604
Franklin	10,309	645
Geneva	5,095	597
Greene	1,761	624
Hale	2,760	667
Henry	3,147	710
Houston	46,841	745
Jackson	16,447	665
Jefferson	341,187	967
Lamar	3,437	699
Lauderdale	29,243	620
Lawrence	4,790	608
Lee	56,392	692
Limestone	22,139	873
Lowndes	2,452	858
Macon	4,685	784
Madison	191,694	1,050
Marengo	6,999	754
Marion	9,738	626
Marshall	35,969	643
Mobile	170,250	844
Monroe	6,122	772
Montgomery	131,996	834
Morgan	47,264	828
Perry	2,034	571
Pickens	3,787	689

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Alabama, second quarter 2016 - Continued

Area	Employment June 2016	Average Weekly Wage(1)
Pike	13,908	770
Randolph	4,682	614
Russell.....	13,553	670
St. Clair.....	19,412	671
Shelby	84,477	922
Sumter.....	3,016	716
Talladega	29,110	848
Tallapoosa	13,804	586
Tuscaloosa	91,205	811
Walker	18,250	665
Washington.....	3,613	1,117
Wilcox	2,677	749
Winston	7,443	642

Footnotes(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, second quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	June 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	142,717.2	1.5	\$989	--	2.2	--
Alabama	1,923.5	1.2	835	37	2.0	29
Alaska	338.7	-2.4	1,011	10	-1.7	49
Arizona	2,619.6	2.6	921	22	1.9	33
Arkansas	1,197.5	1.1	785	47	3.0	7
California	16,754.1	2.5	1,157	5	2.4	19
Colorado	2,574.5	2.3	999	14	1.0	43
Connecticut	1,689.9	-0.1	1,213	3	3.0	7
Delaware	444.0	0.9	990	16	-0.6	48
District of Columbia	756.0	1.7	1,623	1	1.1	42
Florida	8,161.8	3.2	883	25	2.6	14
Georgia	4,269.5	2.7	929	21	2.7	11
Hawaii	643.4	1.0	906	24	3.5	5
Idaho	699.7	3.3	740	50	3.8	3
Illinois	5,945.0	0.2	1,038	9	2.4	19
Indiana	2,995.4	1.0	828	39	2.1	27
Iowa	1,566.0	0.3	825	40	2.9	9
Kansas	1,378.4	-0.2	829	38	1.2	39
Kentucky	1,877.2	1.5	838	36	1.9	33
Louisiana	1,905.2	-1.4	852	32	0.2	46
Maine	622.8	1.0	795	46	3.5	5
Maryland	2,656.0	0.9	1,070	8	2.5	15
Massachusetts	3,538.2	1.2	1,233	2	2.0	29
Michigan	4,300.9	1.9	942	19	2.7	11
Minnesota	2,846.8	0.7	997	15	2.0	29
Mississippi	1,120.1	0.5	727	51	2.5	15
Missouri	2,785.6	1.4	863	30	2.4	19
Montana	468.6	2.2	767	48	1.7	35
Nebraska	978.3	0.9	805	43	2.4	19
Nevada	1,289.4	3.3	874	27	2.2	26
New Hampshire	655.1	1.1	1,003	12	3.7	4
New Jersey	4,051.2	1.7	1,147	6	1.7	35
New Mexico	808.1	-0.3	812	42	0.9	44
New York	9,264.0	1.5	1,210	4	2.5	15
North Carolina	4,285.3	2.5	865	29	2.1	27
North Dakota	423.3	-4.9	908	23	-3.3	51
Ohio	5,353.1	0.8	882	26	2.0	29
Oklahoma	1,570.5	-1.4	823	41	0.6	45
Oregon	1,867.8	2.7	933	20	4.1	2
Pennsylvania	5,786.8	0.4	971	17	1.4	37
Rhode Island	482.9	0.6	949	18	2.5	15
South Carolina	2,013.7	2.4	804	44	2.8	10
South Dakota	432.7	1.0	760	49	2.7	11
Tennessee	2,900.4	2.4	874	27	1.3	38
Texas	11,810.7	1.0	1,000	13	1.2	39
Utah	1,395.9	3.8	840	35	2.3	25
Vermont	310.6	-0.1	850	33	2.4	19
Virginia	3,833.4	1.6	1,011	10	1.2	39
Washington	3,281.6	2.8	1,083	7	5.4	1
West Virginia	693.2	-1.9	800	45	-0.4	47
Wisconsin	2,869.1	0.9	856	31	2.4	19
Wyoming	281.7	-3.7	849	34	-2.2	50
Puerto Rico	879.5	-0.7	512	(3)	0.2	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, second quarter 2016 - Continued

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	June 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
Virgin Islands	38.4	0.9	743	(3)	-0.4	(3)

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Alabama, second quarter 2016

